



Introduction

Locating future **DEVELOPMENT** wisely is essential to meeting our goals of maintaining **OPEN SPACE** and encouraging logical growth patterns. Methods for achieving these goals include **INFILLING** on **UNDEVELOPED** private land and judiciously using state and federal lands acquired through sale or exchange. Identifying **GROWTH AREAS** not only provides additional certainty to developers, but it also conserves natural resources. Another challenge we face is paying for growth; possible options include assessing **IMPACT FEES** to cover the cost of capital projects associated with new development. Ideally, cost-recovery methods are tied to a **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)** adopted by the County. Supporting and driving growth are new jobs. Improving job opportunities requires a coordinated regional approach to economic development, with a focus on appropriate employers.

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This Element discusses key factors in designating growth areas, looks at the future of federal and state lands, and examines our options for paying for future growth, including capital improvements planning. It also covers issues related to economic development. The goals and policies of this Element complement those in the Land Use Element—they promote orderly growth in a way that protects the **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**.

The Conservation Framework Relationship

Because accommodating future growth responsibly hinges on making sound land use decisions, this Element is strongly related to all five ecological principles and eleven **CONSERVATION GUIDELINES** specified in the **CONSERVATION FRAMEWORK**. These principles and guidelines provide a concise list of criteria to consider when reviewing **DEVELOPMENT** plans. They support concentrating new development in or near existing communities to protect **LANDSCAPES** and **HABITATS**, conserve resources, and minimize effects on **ECOLOGICAL PROCESSES**. They also dictate that economic development focus on using local resources and developing new, environmentally appropriate industries.

Our Purpose & Vision

In our vision for Coconino County, future growth and development are accommodated in designated areas that preserve open space and landscapes. The goals and policies of this Element help ensure that growth occurs in areas that have an appropriate level of infrastructure and services. Through capital improvement planning and successful allocation of the costs associated with new growth, residents are assured an acceptable level of government services. A range of economic development opportunities provides a diverse employment base and ensures the county’s continued economic vitality.



Growth Areas

Criteria & Description



J. Ernest Jaffe

GROWTH BOUNDARY

A line denoting areas where higher densities are encouraged to accommodate expected growth, usually where infrastructure can be provided. Outside this line, development must occur under the zoning that existed when the boundary was created.

INHOLDING

Private property that is surrounded on all four sides by land managed by the U.S. Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management.

Arizona's *Growing Smarter* legislation requires that counties with populations exceeding 200,000 devote a section of their comprehensive plan to **GROWTH AREAS**. Specifically, they must identify areas that are suitable for **MULTIMODAL** transportation and infrastructure improvements that apply to concentrated uses. Although Coconino County's population was less than 200,000 as of 2002, identifying future growth areas makes good planning sense. *Growing Smarter* requires policies for mixed-use planning to increase the efficiency of **CIRCULATION SYSTEMS**, to make infrastructure expansion more economical, and to conserve natural resources and open areas.

An **URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY** was established around portions of the City of Flagstaff; likewise, **RURAL GROWTH BOUNDARIES** were established around the private land base in nearby unincorporated communities—Doney Park, Timberline–Fernwood, Fort Valley, Kachina Village/Forest Highlands, Mountainaire, and Bellemont. In some areas, private **INHOLDINGS** were not included within a boundary because future development was intended to conform to existing **ZONING**. These areas lie within a national forest, farther from established communities; they include Hart Prairie, Rogers Lake, and lands south of Lake Mary Road.

GROWTH BOUNDARIES could be drawn outside of the Flagstaff area as well, particularly for growing communities such as Blue Ridge, Forest Lakes, Mormon Lake, Pinewood / Munds Park, Valle, and the central core area of Parks. Such boundaries would facilitate approval for higher density or commercial development in areas that are already served by infrastructure and in areas where fire protection and other services are available. The availability of infrastructure is the most important criterion for establishing a growth area; rezoning to higher density is discouraged in remote areas where infrastructure cannot be provided by extending existing improvements.

INFILLING is likely to be the method for accommodating growth in the near future. The *Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan* and all of the county's **AREA PLANS** call for developing the existing private land base before looking to other lands. When all available private land is occupied, we can accommodate growth using various approaches. One such approach involves expanding growth boundaries; in most areas, this means developing lands that are managed by the Arizona State Land Department or the U.S. Forest Service. Other approaches include redeveloping certain areas to increase their density, developing new communities, and allowing or encouraging growth in communities located at some distance from employment centers (such as Winslow or Ash Fork for those desiring to work in Flagstaff). New growth could occur in other parts of the county—for example, along major highways—within new, mixed-use communities, where infrastructure is provided as part of community development.

State Lands

The State of Arizona holds its lands in trust. It can sell or lease these lands to generate revenue for beneficiaries of the trust, the largest of which is the public school system. In Coconino County, most state lands are leased for grazing; some are leased for commercial and other purposes. Some state lands have been sold in the Flagstaff area. In **URBAN** areas, the state actively leases or sells its lands for future development. Within the Flagstaff urban growth boundary, one section and portions of three others are identified for future development.

Growing Smarter requires that counties confer with the State Land Department “for the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the county.” This agency is required to develop draft conceptual land use plans outlining development in all **STATE TRUST LANDS**. Such a plan was written in 2002 for



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lands in the Flagstaff urban area. Outside of the incorporated city limits, it identifies most state sections for very low density residential development—in some cases, one unit per 50 acres. In rural areas, the State Land Department has no plans for active disposal and does not intend to develop conceptual plans in the foreseeable future.

As of 2002, no state **SECTIONS** in the unincorporated county were in the likely path of development. A few small portions of sections that could or should be disposed of for development either lie adjacent to existing development (for example, in Greentown) or they are already developed (for example, on Route 66, just west of the Flagstaff city limits, and at Twin Arrows). In rural areas, most state sections should be retained as **OPEN SPACE** and leased for grazing or managed for **CONSERVATION** in conjunction with large ranches.

Growing Smarter also established a program to nominate certain state trust lands for reclassification to “suitable for conservation.” The **ARIZONA PRESERVE INITIATIVE** allows state lands with high environmental and open space values to be temporarily reclassified for conservation while municipalities, counties, or other groups raise funds to buy the land.⁶⁷

Of particular concern are the hundreds of state sections in checkerboard ownership areas. Where ranches are sold and platted into 40-acre lots, alternating state sections could increase in value. However, as of 2002, the State Land Department had no intention of selling state trust lands for **40-ACRE LOT DEVELOPMENT**. On working ranches, the state sections are just as important for wildlife and open space values as private lands. Assuming that ranches are managed in a way that preserves environmental values, the best solution may be increasing the length of the lease. As of 2003, leases could be for no more than 10 years.

The Centennial Forest covers a large checkerboard area southwest of Flagstaff that is characterized by a mix of Forest Service and state sections. Most of these state lands are managed for research purposes by Northern Arizona University through an agreement with the State Land Department.

Federal Lands

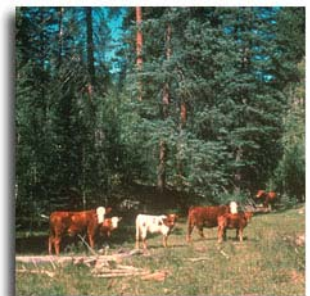
Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands can be exchanged for private lands, a process that has been used extensively over the last half century. Land exchanges can direct growth away from remote or **ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS** and focus it near existing communities where infrastructure is available or easy to accommodate. The process is initiated by owners of private inholdings who want to acquire federal land. An environmental assessment must be completed by the federal land management agency, and exchanges are based on equal fair market value. This occurred in the 1990s in Blue Ridge, where isolated private sections were traded for **FORESTLAND** adjacent to existing development. This program allows the Forest Service to consolidate lands, protect important **HABITAT** areas, and free up additional land for growth.

Many private parcels are good candidates for land exchange because they contain **RIPARIAN AREAS**, open meadows, or other environmentally sensitive lands. In addition, some very remote parcels should be acquired to prevent wildlife **HABITAT FRAGMENTATION** and avoid the problems associated with providing services to such areas. Acquiring such lands means giving up federal lands for development. In some cases, these lands can be located in communities outside the county, although retaining some federal lands may be desirable or necessary to accommodate future growth. The *Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan*⁶⁸ identified forestlands in the Doney Park area as low priority for retention as open space, lands that could eventually be exchanged for future development. There are likely additional lands adjacent to existing communities where growth and the extension of services is logical.



SEE ALSO PAGE 89

Land Use: Residential – 40-Acre Ranchettes



Because most federal land lies within the open space zone, a zone change is required for development after the exchange—such changes are not automatic. The property owner typically requests a zoning reclassification based on zoning in the immediate area. This request must be approved by the **PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION** and the **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**.

Goal: Concentrate development in designated growth areas while preserving open space and landscapes.

Policies:

1. The County supports designation of rural growth boundaries around existing communities as new Area Plans are developed or as existing plans are updated. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINE: B*



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2. The County may support higher density residential development and commercial development within growth areas where physical infrastructure and public safety and community services are available.
3. The County strongly supports infill development of vacant lands within existing developed areas before outlying or more remote lands are considered for development. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINE: B*
4. Planned communities with a mix of uses are encouraged where infrastructure and services exist or can be provided.
5. Rezoning to higher density is discouraged in more remote areas where the provision of infrastructure is not a logical extension of existing improvements.
6. The County supports federal acquisition through exchange or purchase of private inholdings surrounded by national forest or BLM lands that are important habitat areas, that contain environmentally sensitive lands, or that would reduce fragmentation. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINES: B, C, D, E*



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Cost of Development

As of 2002, those developing a **SUBDIVISION** must pay not only for on-site infrastructure but usually for some off-site improvements, such as turn lanes and water lines. However, developers do not pay, other than through the additional general tax revenues generated by the development, for public facilities such as new **PARKS** and **TRAILS**, sheriff's facilities, traffic signals, utility upgrades, schools, and highway improvements. Instead, funds originate from bonds, special districts, **IMPACT FEES**, and/or

dedications. Bonding has funded school improvements, and more recently, park improvements; special districts have funded road improvements.

Coconino County has not yet chosen to assess impact fees on new construction, although it has the legal authority to do so. Such fees could be added to the building permit fee to offset a portion of the cost of the capital projects required to support the new development. Needs are determined via a study that covers the geographic area around the development. Impact fees can only cover the incremental cost of the capital facility that is attributable to each house, and fees must be spent in the area where they were collected to benefit residents. Municipalities around the country charge impact fees to

IMPACT FEE

A fee imposed on new development to help finance the cost of improvements or services necessary for the development.



cover costs for road improvements, police and fire stations, parks, libraries, traffic signals, and many other public services and facilities.

In a rural county where few permits are issued in any given area, it is difficult to implement an impact fee program. Impact fees have been discussed for the Doney Park area to improve roads and parks; however, because few permits are issued there, the fees would pay for a very small percentage of the improvements. Another issue is that impact fees can only pay for improvements related to new development—not existing deficiencies—and the connection between improvements and development is not always clear. Further study is required to determine the feasibility of impact fees and other sources of revenue for future capital improvements. However, given the County's lack of money for capital improvements, discussions about such fees will continue.

Goal: Ensure an equitable means of paying for the costs associated with growth.

Policies:

7. Development projects shall be required to pay their fair share of off-site improvements and public facilities such as roads and utilities necessary to support the development.
8. Applicants for all new development projects shall assure an adequate level of services including roads, water and wastewater, fire protection and utilities.

Capital Improvements

Capital facilities include a wide range of physical infrastructure and systems needed to support communities. The most basic include transportation infrastructure, water and **WASTEWATER** systems, utilities, libraries, and schools, as well as facilities required for public safety, medical and health care, parks and recreation, and solid waste disposal, among others. Various entities are responsible for capital improvement projects. In the public works arena, for example, Coconino County administers road, drainage, flood control, parks, and transit projects. Other entities—school, fire, and special **IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS**, as well as private sector organizations—address capital improvements in their respective areas. The *Coconino County Comprehensive Plan* encourages such entities to coordinate in ensuring that facilities are provided in the right places, at the right time.

Typically, **CIPs** identify, prioritize, and schedule capital facility improvements over a certain period—usually 5 or 10 years, but sometimes up to 20 years. This allows local governments to match their capital expenditures with needs of existing and developing communities; in some cases, the CIP can guide development in a preferred direction. In Coconino County, priority is placed on critical infrastructure improvements necessary for public safety and well-being.

Capital improvement planning should consider the overall socioeconomic effects of proposed projects, which should be compatible with the existing community character and should not affect neighborhoods negatively. Scenic, environmental, and other resource-related impacts are also important considerations. Furthermore, generally accepted planning principles call for the logical extension of existing infrastructure to reduce the long-term negative impacts of sprawl, avoid unnecessary leapfrog development, and ultimately provide capital improvements in the most cost-effective manner.



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Goal: **Coordinate capital improvements in a timely, orderly, and cost-effective manner.**

Policies:

9. The County will set an example in its capital improvement planning process by considering the overall social, economic, energy, and environmental effects of proposed projects. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINES: A, B, C, K*
10. Capital improvements shall be planned for, sited, built, and operated in a manner that provides for the logical extension of existing infrastructure and are compatible with community character, and in harmony with scenic and environmental resources.
11. Private development projects shall ensure that infrastructure improvements are consistent with public CIPs.
12. As deemed necessary to support major developments and subdivisions, developers in cooperation with utility providers shall be responsible for the installation, construction, or upgrade of necessary public utilities without diminishing the level of service to existing residents. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINE: B*
13. As part of the capital improvement planning process, the County will identify and determine the means of dedicating sites and acquiring rights-of-way for future improvement projects. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINE: E*

Economic Development

Future Commercial & Industrial

Historically, the County has not actively sought new commercial and industrial businesses. All five municipalities have economic development programs, and the County works with cities and towns to address land development opportunities in unincorporated areas. For example, it has worked with the Greater Flagstaff Economic Council on economic development projects throughout the county.



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Opportunities are plentiful for acquiring relatively inexpensive land for economic development, especially in the Bellemont area. Unfortunately, investments have not been made in the proper road, water, and **WASTEWATER** infrastructure to fully use industrial-zoned land parcels. Additional opportunities may exist in areas that are undeveloped or not zoned for economic development, such as the Interstate 40 corridor east of Flagstaff toward Winslow. In Williams and Fredonia, land suitable for new commercial and industrial activity has been annexed to provide urban services and reap tax benefits.



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Our best economic development options focus on “basic-sector” industries—those that sell products outside the county and bring income into the local economy from outside. Basic-sector industries create a “multiplier effect” that generates additional retail and service jobs required to support each basic sector job. Because protecting the **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**, especially air and water quality, is so important, only “clean” industries are appropriate. Likewise, because we have limited water supplies, we can support only industries that use low net volumes of water.



Jobs/Housing Mix

Residents have long expressed concern about the disparity between income and cost of living, especially in the Flagstaff area. Less than half of Flagstaff households can afford the median-priced, single-family home; many spend far more than one-third of their income on housing. In addition to finding ways to provide more **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**, the other solution to this problem is raising incomes and attracting new employers that pay acceptable, **LIVABLE WAGES**.

Locating jobs and housing in close proximity can reduce travel times and dependency on single-occupancy commutes, thereby reducing gasoline consumption and environmental impacts. However, this has become increasingly difficult. Many households have two or more residents with jobs in different locations, a trend facilitated by the availability of major highways. For example, although housing has been developed near industrial areas in Bellemont, those residents will likely work in Flagstaff; nevertheless, the opportunity for mixed uses exists. Our goal is to avoid creating large areas or communities that are exclusively residential, commercial, or industrial.

Enterprise Zone

Enterprise zones provide a way to lure prospective employers to the county through tax incentives. An enterprise zone is a designated area where incomes are lower than the county average and there is a desire to attract new employers. Industries or businesses in enterprise zones can take advantage of income tax credits. Other incentives include property tax reclassification for qualified manufacturing firms. An enterprise zone has been designated in a large part of the county extending from Blue Ridge to Fredonia.

Niche Industries

Certain industries may want to locate in Coconino County because it offers unique products, markets, or local resources, such as the small-diameter trees that are removed from ponderosa pine forests and juniper woodlands to improve their health and reduce fire risk. Another potential niche industry is native seed production, which could benefit developers and homeowners in planting locally appropriate vegetation.

Tourism

Tourism will continue to play a significant role in the economy of the county. Grand Canyon National Park draws approximately 5 million visitors annually, and approximately 3 million people visit Oak Creek Canyon and Lake Powell. Other nationally known attractions such as Sunset Crater, Walnut Canyon, and Wupatki also draw large numbers of tourists. In addition, newly designated national monuments in northern Arizona will draw visitors from around the world as they become known, and recreationists will continue to come here to hike, camp, bike, ride horses, and ski.

We can expand the role of tourism by pursuing opportunities in **ECO-TOURISM**, **ETHNO-TOURISM**, and the combination of tourism, recreation, and education offered through programs such as Elderhostel.

LIVABLE WAGE

A wage that is high enough to allow a greater percentage of the population to qualify for housing.



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ETHNO-TOURISM

Tourism that focuses on the enjoyment of, or education about, indigenous people and cultures.



Goal: Ensure a range of economic development opportunities that offers a diverse employment base and a thriving economy.

Policies:

14. The County encourages the establishment of basic sector industries in Coconino County that are consistent with the rural character of the area.
15. The County supports new industry that preserves significant features of the natural environment and that causes minimal impact on resources. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINES: D, G, I*
16. The County supports livable wages.
17. The County supports niche industries that utilize local resources in an environmentally responsible manner. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINE: G*
18. Locating jobs in mixed-use centers or communities is supported in order to minimize travel times and make access to jobs more convenient. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINE: G*
19. The County supports tourist-related development projects that are designed to minimize human impact on the environment, especially if they are focused on showcasing the county's unique features. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINES: B, H*

EDWARD ABBEY

*"Growth for the sake of growth
is a cancerous madness."*

